

# WAVES



ARJAN DEV MAJBOOR



Arjan Dev Majboor's poetry is marked by deftness of expression, deep introspection, progressive outlook and mature treatment. His work constitutes a muffled outcry of his bruised heart against the disappearance of old values and the disequilibrium of modern life.

*From :* Gems of Kashmiri Literature  
by T.N. Kaul

Price Rs. 125/-

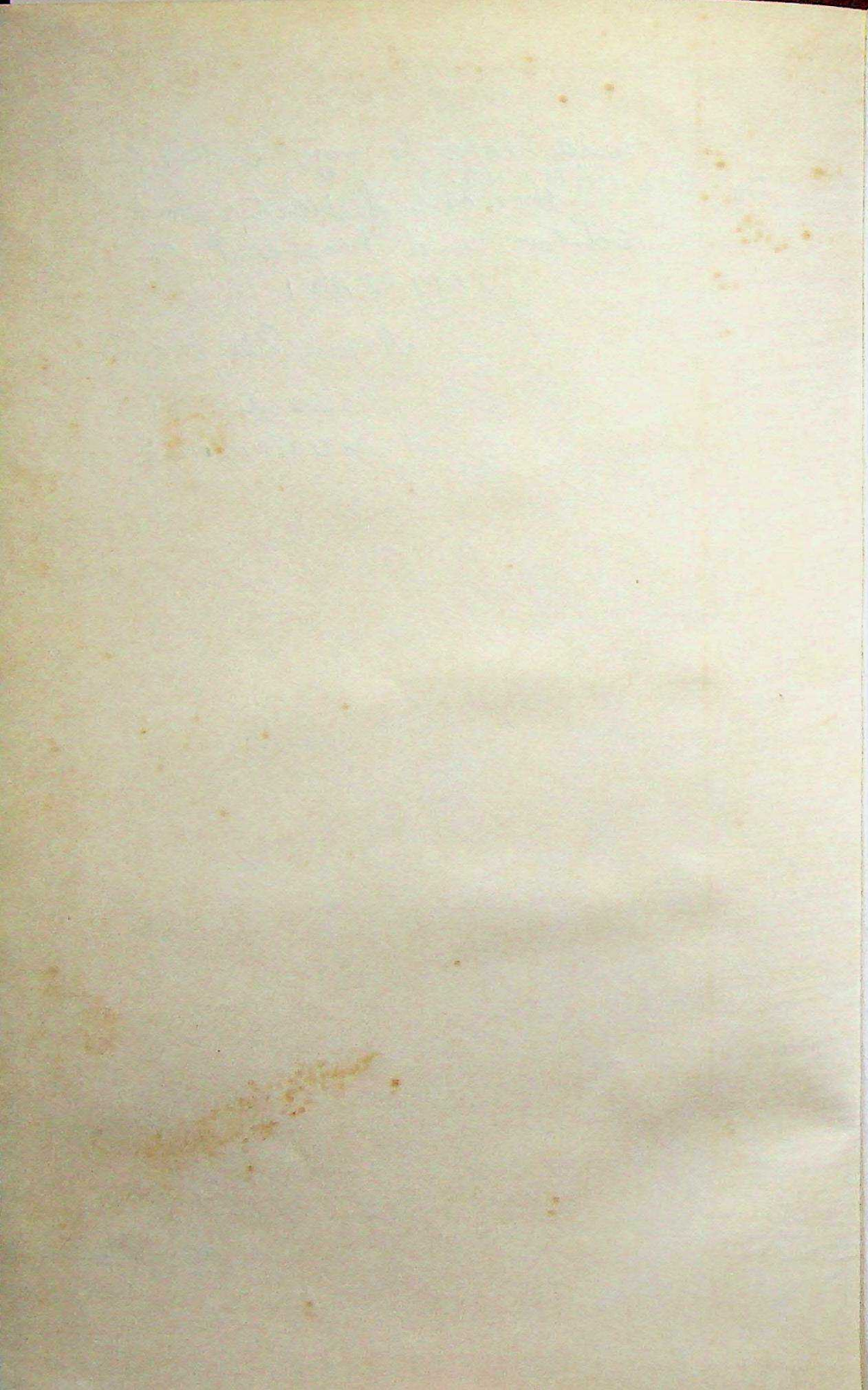
(With love to my Brother  
DR. R. L. SHANT.  
Honoured Writer, Poet,  
Editor and President of  
SAMPRATI

Arjan Dewraj Gaur

22. 4. 99

UDHAMOUR







# WAVES



WYVES



# WAVES

(Poems)

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Jammu

(D)

Acc. No. 480 .....

Dated .. 4 .. 7 .. 2007 .....

Nagraj Publications

New Delhi



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House No: 207 Ward No: 12

Udhampur 182101 (J&K)

Translated from the Kashmiri by Arvind Gigoo

Drawings and cover design by Vijay Zutshi

Printed and published by Arjan Dev Majboor

Published by : Nag Raj Publications

WZ-814, Palam, New Delhi-110 045

Year of publication : 1999

Type setting by : "Bhartiya Institute of Computer  
Technology Udhampur (J&K)".

Printed by : Nice Printing Press  
Delhi

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*Dedicated to  
Dina Nath Nadim*

## A Portrait of a Child

A portrait hung  
on  
the wall.  
The chubby child  
smiled  
and  
opened his Cupid mouth.  
I said :  
“Are you my virgin past?”

The rainbow smile vanished,  
and  
the thoughtful child said :  
“Are you my defiled future?”

The answer reached me.

The old don't remember purity  
and  
children don't know defilement.

\*



## The Bronze Hand

The bronze hand  
rests  
on my heart.

Who gave it life ?

The gem-like nails  
are sensuous.

Is it some damsel's hand  
or  
some goddess'  
blessing mankind  
or  
a hermit's  
meditating upon the word  
or  
Buddha's  
when he spoke of Fire ?

Is it some woman's hand  
caressing the earth  
or  
an infant's  
who wept into existence ?

An endless dream  
squeezed  
into transience.

This wakefulness is dying now.

They say  
long ago  
the hand detached from the idol..

The hand blessed me  
from  
the ledge in the corner.  
My home  
——— in a shambles ———  
is  
my nightmare.

I recall the gem-like nails  
and  
the fingers  
and  
the palm  
of the bronze hand.

\*



## The Topsy - turvy Tree

I saw a topsy - turvy tree.

It said :

“Sir, my roots are in the sky.

This way the world will be set right.”

I shuddered and said :

“What do you mean ?

You are a puzzle.”

The tree said :

“Be quiet.

You are a rebel.

They will imprison you.

Here truth is proscribed,

the guilty thrive,

virtue has decayed

and

morals are dead.”

I said :

“ Listen !

There will be no forests.

Eagles won't fly,

they will walk.

Love will wither.

Compassion will burn

and  
man,  
with the snake,  
will enter the cave."

The tree said :

"You are a rebel.  
Don't call a day a day  
or  
a night a night.  
Say that two suns have risen.  
All are making merry.  
Man is for sale."

I said :

"Mister, your roots will dry up in the hot sun."

The tree said :

"This earth will turn into a blazing inferno.  
My roots don't need water."

I said :

"What shall we eat ?  
Water is life."

The tree said :

"Why need water  
when all are mad ?  
Henceforth,  
flowers will bloom up in the sky,  
a whirlpool will trap all,  
it will rain acid,  
beauty will be auctioned,  
the wise will weep,

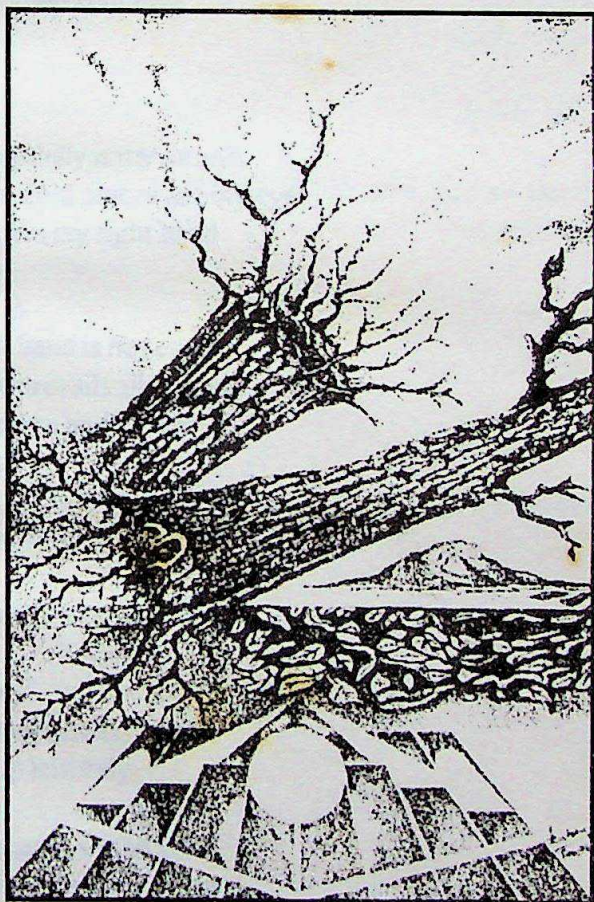


the ignorant will multiply,  
greenery will disappear,  
stones will cover the fields,  
the lakes will become sand  
and  
moans will resound.

Even memory will end."

\*







THE  
JOURNAL OF  
THE  
SOCIETY OF  
THE  
SOUTH  
EAST  
1880

THE  
SOCIETY OF  
THE  
SOUTH  
EAST



## Snow - man

One winter morning  
they shaped me into a snow - man.  
Now I keep standing  
erect  
and  
cold.

The red chilly is my mouth,  
the charcoal pieces are my eyes,  
the staff in my right hand  
is  
my prop.

My left hand is not empty.  
Silence prevails all around.  
They come and tell me :

“ Laugh  
and  
play  
and  
dance  
and  
walk .”

But I melt slowly,  
crack up leisurely  
and  
drip because of the sun.  
The tendril under my feet  
watches  
this invisible shrinkage.



## Fossil

The face is petrified,  
the voice is frozen,  
the yellow teeth gnash,  
the veins are shrunken  
and  
the forehead is nailed.

The look gives a tremulous dazzle  
of a buried civilization.

The true,  
the good  
and the beautiful  
shine.

A living fossil of past ages.

\*

## The Painting

At night  
the painter's imagination  
ran amok  
and  
gave this picture.

The Ganges flowed down the sky  
to make  
wreaths of foam  
and  
hills of corals.

Shiva danced a laugh  
and  
the whole  
became a cosmic laughter.

White clouds shrouded the mountain - peak.

Who dug the stream of milk  
through the mountains  
and  
froze it for a walk ?  
The earth — aglow——  
played the host.  
The stars,



like white doves,  
formed a cluster.

An oriole called.

The painter merged into the picture.

The two became one.

The one,  
in the circular collage,  
is the touchstone.

\*

## Creation

Existence  
surrounded by embers  
spins  
on a needle point

churning the ocean ,  
sucking blood ,  
swallowing the sun ,  
collecting honey from a matchless flower,  
gathering gems in a tempest,  
looking at the dazzling light,  
offering life to a smile,  
playing a game with a gaze,  
towing a broken boat in the lake,  
cleaving one into many,  
tying all tremors,  
taming a lion,  
stroking the dew with looks  
and  
weaving a garland.

\*



## The Star That Fell

A star in the black sky  
peeped  
through the window - pane.

I said :

“I am lonesome like you.  
I am lonesome like a milestone.”

Everything remained unsaid.  
Words travelled  
but  
conveyed nothing.

My eyes longed for the star  
but  
a lightning  
burnt the black cloud.

The star fell.

My look halted.

\*

## The Coming Millennium

With a star on her forehead  
Saraswati  
riding the white -winged horse  
comes  
spreading celestial light.

All are afrenzy.

This wild chase  
is their only hope.

Around whose head will the swan swerve ?  
Who shall she bless ?  
Who shall she feed with divine milk ?

The Muses are out escorting the Rider.

Peace is hers.  
Knowledge is hers.  
Even the Word is hers.

The image of wonders  
is  
in her hand.  
(We call it Science.)



Suddenly she proclaims :

“Arise !  
Reshape the world,  
Purify it,  
Burnish all Arts,  
Peel off dryness,  
Destroy all flaming desires.”

The world was astir.

All said :

“ The Saviour sees through the veil.”

A new world is taking birth.

Close all shops

and

listen to the call of Time.

Welcome the Rider and her band.

Thus

purity will reign,

darkness will vanish

and

fear will go

Melt all weapons

for

they kill.

The seed and the sickle and the water

are

the need.

Love

and

prevail.

Peace will flower.

Will this dream happen ?  
The eternal Rider  
—the new life-giver—  
with a star on her forehead  
is out with the Muses  
to enlighten  
the coming millennium.

Shall I see that birth ?

\*



## The Fowl

One said :

“Wonderful !

The fowl has two legs.”

Another said :

“ No , the fowl has four legs.”

The stubborn are foolish.

The third came  
with a swollen head  
and  
a bulging belly.

He said :

“ Wrong !

You are wrong.

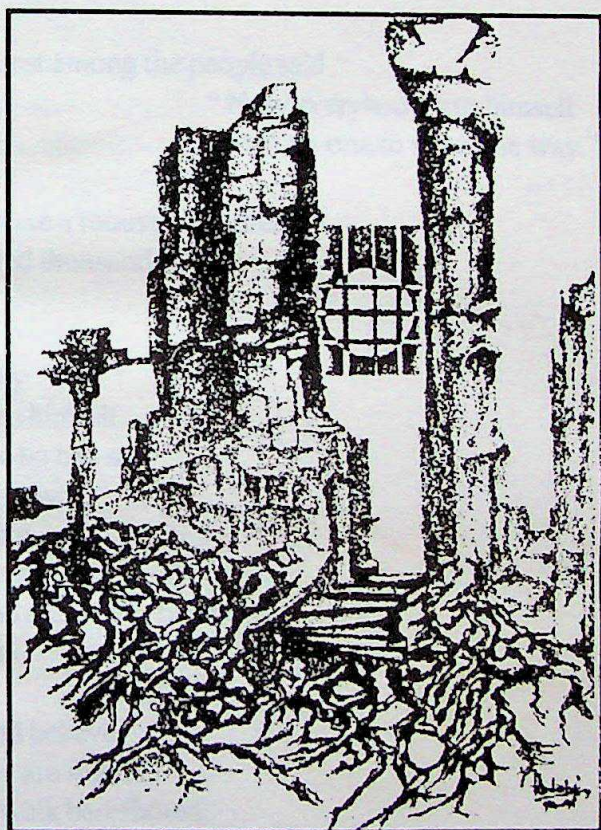
The fowl has only one leg.

I will continue repeating that  
the fowl has only one leg  
even if you don't agree.”

A cat pounced upon the fowl  
and  
had a hearty meal.

\*







## The Fort

General

1864-1865

North 1864

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

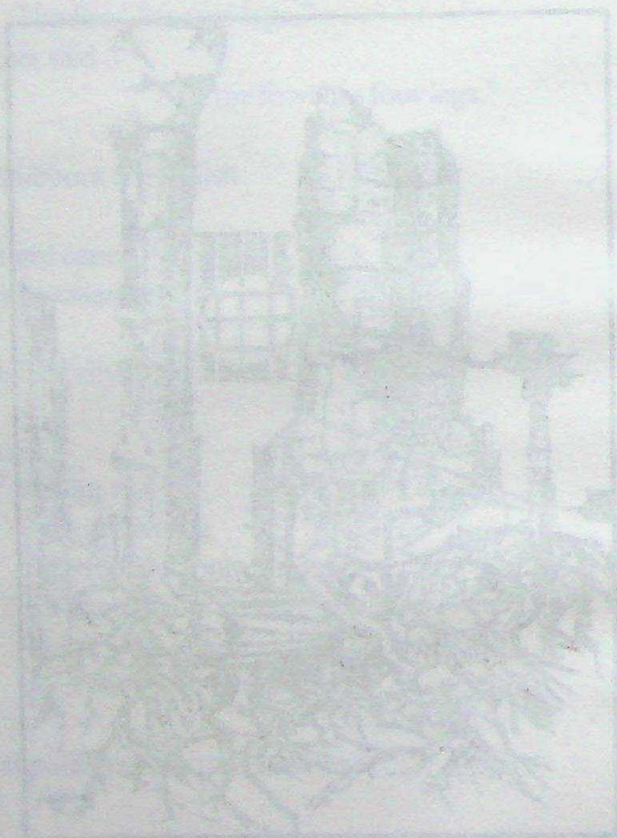
Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.

Fort Mifflin, Pa.



## The City

A camel ran amok  
in the city.

The wisest among the people said :

“ Now everybody is to himself.  
I am no one to show the way.”

There were a thousand masters,  
a hundred thousand rulers.

Now  
in the city  
each is to himself.  
Those who can see  
have run away.  
All prattle,  
they are stone-deaf.  
They call this frantic blindness  
freedom.

The blind believe  
that they are sages.  
People walk barefooted.  
Shoes cap their heads.



The black will not go  
if you wash up the crow.

A camel has run amok  
and  
the city is Babel.

\*

## The Hungry Man

The evening shadow fell upon  
the sinful city.  
There was stillness.  
The street lamps shone ,  
the window panes turned gold,  
the frolic-lovers drank to their fill,  
the kitchens brightened ,  
the sellers counted coins.  
The streets were deserted.

A lean man  
with a sack  
was searching his fate.  
He picked up  
rags ,  
plastic pieces ,  
broken spoons  
and  
put them in the sack.

Hunger was his lone companion.

At last  
he found the Stone  
and paused for a thought,  
but  
put the Stone into his sack  
and  
moved on.



## Lover

I came  
made sacrifice  
and offered —  
Coming  
sacrifice  
and  
offering  
were syllables,  
breaths.

My bath in the flames was a game.

This incense is my history ,  
my being ,  
my becoming ,  
my fullness.

I am a cradle for storms.  
The finale struggles  
in my oceanic mind.

The solitude of beauty  
is  
dear  
but  
dearer

the search for a ray  
in darkness.

Why fret ?

New twigs will sprout,  
the mirror will speak,  
the earth will smile,  
the rising sun will watch  
her dream and her dance.

\*



## Chiselled Words

I said :

“ I offer you words.”

They said :

“ They are useless.”

I said :

“ I sculpted them. Take them.”

They said:

“ They have lost meaning.

Give us new.”

On the street

I saw

a scarecrow laughing

at

the bent huts.

The wise hang from

paper-pegs on the walls.

From the shoulders

I shook off

noisy phantoms.

With horrid faces

they danced like mad.

I sat still  
on the balcony  
and  
watched all.

Everything was in pell-mell.

But soon  
a soft murmur  
consoled me.

I snatched  
the cloth,  
the sunny spot  
and the mirror reflecting virtue.  
They are my help.

I heard a call :  
“ What do you desire ?”

I said :  
“ Give me words ,  
the miracle of words.  
Give me  
the springs of love ,  
the grey dawn ,  
basketfuls of flowers ,  
the dancing shy moon ,  
fragrant colourful dusk.  
They will wash the pale earth.  
Light will cover the world.  
I have to sweeten  
stale conscience  
and



light lamps in the dark meandering  
streets  
for  
the thinking walk through them."

Once more  
I chiselled words  
and  
embellished them.

Then I said :

"Words, I have given you life.  
Come out of the prison afresh.  
Old canons don't become you."

\*









## Secret

This hidden secret is my treasure.  
Why lift the veil !  
Each moment  
is  
a dance of the mountains  
Each moment  
is  
a torque.

The noisy world is fleeting.

The thread  
———my path———  
is a labyrinth,  
a maze.

Time laughs a laugh.

Colour gives out fragrance.  
What a miracle!

People have forgotten  
that



autumn set in early.  
Forgetfulness is prison for some.  
The silence of the night  
and  
its solitude  
are a hope for the morning.

This hidden secret is my treasure.  
Why lift the veil!

\*

## Wilderness

I spent my age  
writing this legend.  
But the pages  
leapt towards the sky.  
A dusty cobweb  
besieged me.

Time was at work.

The fault was not mine.

A few moments were given to me in trust.  
The world maligned me.  
Now  
I am stranded in wilderness  
waiting for  
the tree ,  
the water  
and  
the light.

I am the mosaic.

My glass-house will not crumble.  
Each day



I light a lamp in the whirlwind.

I am a stage of the caravan.

Peep into me  
and listen to the ancient ballad.

It is endless.

\*

## A Funeral

The long bright day enters into the black night.  
There is a cold funeral  
and  
with crooked and distorted faces  
the mourners squelch through the ooze.  
Decay is the pilgrim.

The oily black stallions canter past.  
It is a point - to - point.  
I hold the reins,  
I also hold the reins.  
But  
who pulls them ?

A lone boat  
is voyaging in the panting muddy water.  
The rudder is not visible  
nor  
the boatman.

Man has to tighten the string  
and  
use the plectrum  
inspite of  
the funerals.

\*



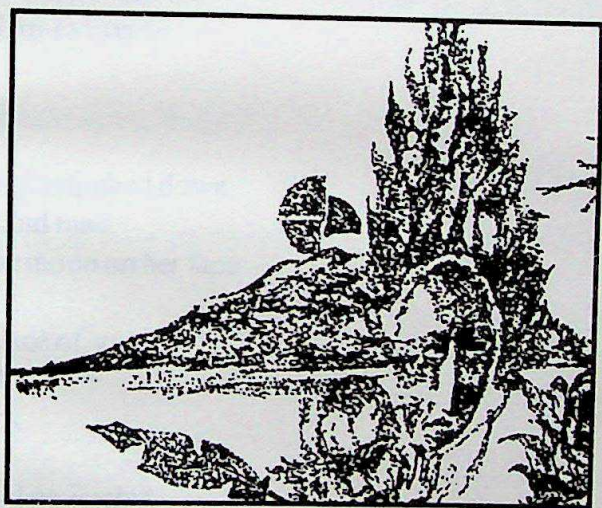
## The Sign

The old and beautiful book  
masks all meaning.  
The squiggly signs  
hide  
the essence.

They tried to know  
the meaning,  
they even smelled  
the signs  
but  
what they saw  
was a frightening blank.

Their dazed faces read  
that  
the sign is  
the strength  
and  
wonder.

\*







## A Juggler's Trick

The day happened,  
played upon the tabor  
and  
frisked away like a juggler's trick.

The hot sun cooled off,  
erased my existence  
and  
left.

Cold night climbed down  
naked and mad  
with the moon on her face  
and  
a necklace of stars  
around  
her neck.

The anklets jingled.  
The night stole my being  
and  
frisked away.

Even the night proved a juggler's trick.

\*



## Mind

With a rock heavy upon his head  
he stammers :

“All will be ash.  
Even the birds will not sing.”

The silver anklets have turned  
black  
and  
mute.

People are lost in the desert  
and  
the sun is hidden behind the dark clouds.

The mountains will sink into the oceans ,  
hay will become steel ,  
water will reach the rim of the well.

My mind is mercury.  
Wild!  
Doesn't stop —,  
doesn't even listen.

Again it jumps out of the window  
to race about  
in the sky.

\*

## The Dance is On

A swallow flew in  
with the breeze  
and  
bathed in fire.

Words and lips  
stuck

Fragrance spread over the roof.

The swallow  
searched for her nest  
and  
finding none  
trembled.

Hennaed cobbles have  
illumined civilization.  
She flew away  
with her desolate longings  
looking back  
again  
and  
again.  
Once more dreams intoxicated her.



There  
at the foot of the hill is a cottage ;  
and  
a full - bodied virgin,  
springing like a roe,  
radiates saffron hue.  
The winds blow,  
springs bubble  
and  
infinite flowers bloom.  
The meadow is full.

With the two lamps in her hands  
who shall she kiss ?

The dance is on.

\*

## Rootless

Each warm evening  
wet memories  
transfix my heart  
and  
cripple me.

Helplessness floods the room.  
Objects shiver.

My existence is a knot.

Home and river and rustle  
flit and pass.

Hope is hazy.

That city is a litter of  
broken bricks,  
burnt houses  
and  
choked gutters.  
Their present,  
our past  
and  
your future



fall to pieces before the gun.

The gaping wound  
speaks  
of broken man's  
chopped fate.

\*

## Prison

That gaol is comfort.  
Release from it means sweet home.

This gaol is torture.  
It has fetters for the innocent.

Heritage has gone astray  
because  
the past has burnt.  
Blossoms have bloomed  
even in the dry sand.

In the dark cells  
they still try to know ——  
On the door of hell  
they yearn for their yesterday.

Patience breaks stones  
and  
tired eyes recall  
the marigold  
and the green leaf.

There is a crematorium  
by the prison gate.

The prisoners smile.

\*



1. 1900

That year is recorded  
in the old book of the house

This year is recorded  
in the old book of the house

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away

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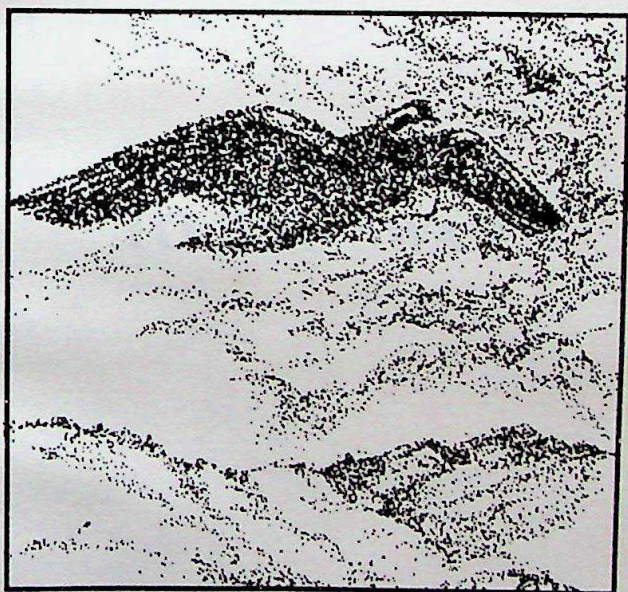
Heritage has gone away

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Heritage has gone away

Heritage has gone away







## TO THE SWAN





I opened my heart to the swan ,  
gave him  
the chariot of my liquid memories,  
made him  
recollect the heavenly green spot.  
I wove a wreath of past events,  
held a mirror of time,  
showed him the scarred hush of my being.

His thoughts sped fast  
and  
in ecstasy  
he ruffed up his wings.

Then I said :

“Yours is the infinite freedom.

Glide in the sky

and

inspect the world that was mine  
once.

Fly over the mountain peaks

and

find out the source of light.

Be careful

when you see the blinding fog.

“You will face clouds

enveloping the mountain tops.

Peer through the fluffs

to find the right path.

While flying over the grasslands  
and woods

don't give your throbbing heart  
to a forest damsel.



Pick up the essence  
from the flowers ,  
dye your Self in the jungle light ,  
pour love into the cup of your thought,  
shower kisses upon the milky  
snow.

And then  
come back  
with the wonder.

“Rest near a small spring  
and  
get at the safe airy bridges.  
Sit in the crotch of a tree  
and  
glissade through the crevices.  
The clear mountain rivulets  
will  
wash you a warm welcome.  
Tell them :

‘This haste promises a light.  
Bless me  
for  
the task is sublime.’

“When the night falls  
shin up a fir tree  
and count the holy days.  
The wind will give you  
blissful peace ;  
juicy fruits shall be yours .  
Listen to the symphony  
of the trees in the forest.



Let your mind swim  
in the icy water.  
Nature collects silver for you.

“If you get tired  
rest on the golden hay  
on a hill top.  
Spread your wings in the sun  
and call up  
your old pathways .  
Your resting place will come.  
You will breathe in the sweet air  
away from the city.  
Bliss will be yours.  
From afar they will say :

‘Look !  
That is a tiny bird .  
on the wing  
or  
a morning lotus in the lake

“ Lush greenery will enchant you.  
You will hear Meaning  
in the tune of the lute.  
The goal is distant  
but  
you will reach the blooms.  
Plead with the cliffs for the time  
when splendour glistened ,  
when glory ruled ,  
when wisdom flourished ,  
when strength held fast.



“Time,  
an eagle,  
flies.  
Catch it.  
Cover the globe with skyey love.  
Don't let the colours  
benumb your sense.  
Gather the herbs that cure  
and  
burn the thistles that prick.  
Strut over the aerial passes  
that connect mountains.  
Bid fear adieu.  
You will reach the goal in time.

“Fly and hover above  
the green fields.  
Cuddle a longing in your lap.  
The glaze of the boulders  
sings a legend.  
The landscape will recount  
a new and fresh tale.  
You will see the Full  
when you unveil the mystery.  
You will measure  
darkness with light.

“You are my smiling innocent childhood.  
Yours is my strength,  
yours is my necklace of pearls.  
Warm sunny days  
and  
cool sleeping nights are yours.  
Yours is my fiery youth,



yours is my love.  
You have the kernel of the Word,  
you know the shape of the path.  
You have seen  
the flash of the moment.

“Have courage  
and  
dark death will not shadow you.  
He  
who sees all  
lives.  
The throne that life sits on  
is a thorn.  
The wise have said :  
‘ Time is holy. Use it well.’

Decipher the words  
before you speak  
for  
tomorrow is unborn.  
Look, Noah’s Ark is caught  
in a tempest.

“White clouds and the rays  
will weave a shawl.  
Dark clouds will flee,  
the huts will take a new shape,  
the walls that divide  
will crumble.  
Spread love over the hamlets  
and  
villages.  
Rest their images  
in your eyes.



Wish all well  
and bless them.  
Change the flames into flowers.

“The ocean of my remembrance  
is  
before you .  
Choose carefully;  
separate the true from the untrue;  
view all  
and  
come back with truth.  
I will deck the sanctuary for you  
and  
hug you at the diamond -studded gate.

“You will see infinite blossoms  
and green patches.  
You will feel icy winds  
wash up shy bushes.  
At sundown  
the angels in white  
descend  
and  
whisper honeyed truth.  
Get me an image of the scene.  
Get me sweet water.

“Somewhere water is ready  
for a tango.  
In the past  
kings, courtiers and travellers  
drank there.  
Saints counted beads on rosaries



and  
hermits meditated.  
A place for all  
to go into a trance.  
Implore all  
to restore peace in the valley,  
to cure all aching wounds  
and  
to end grief.

“Goggle at the Seven Springs  
to know  
that renunciation is Reality.  
The ripples will play  
among the boulders.  
The waters  
retell the tales of the Nagas.  
Piety will swill stones.  
The soul of the valley is pure.

“Ancient ruins are asleep.  
Awaken them  
with the woeful tale.  
Murmur my agony.  
The mountains shine  
and  
the silver glitters.  
The saints’ prayers  
echo  
from every corner  
and  
arouse the thinking.



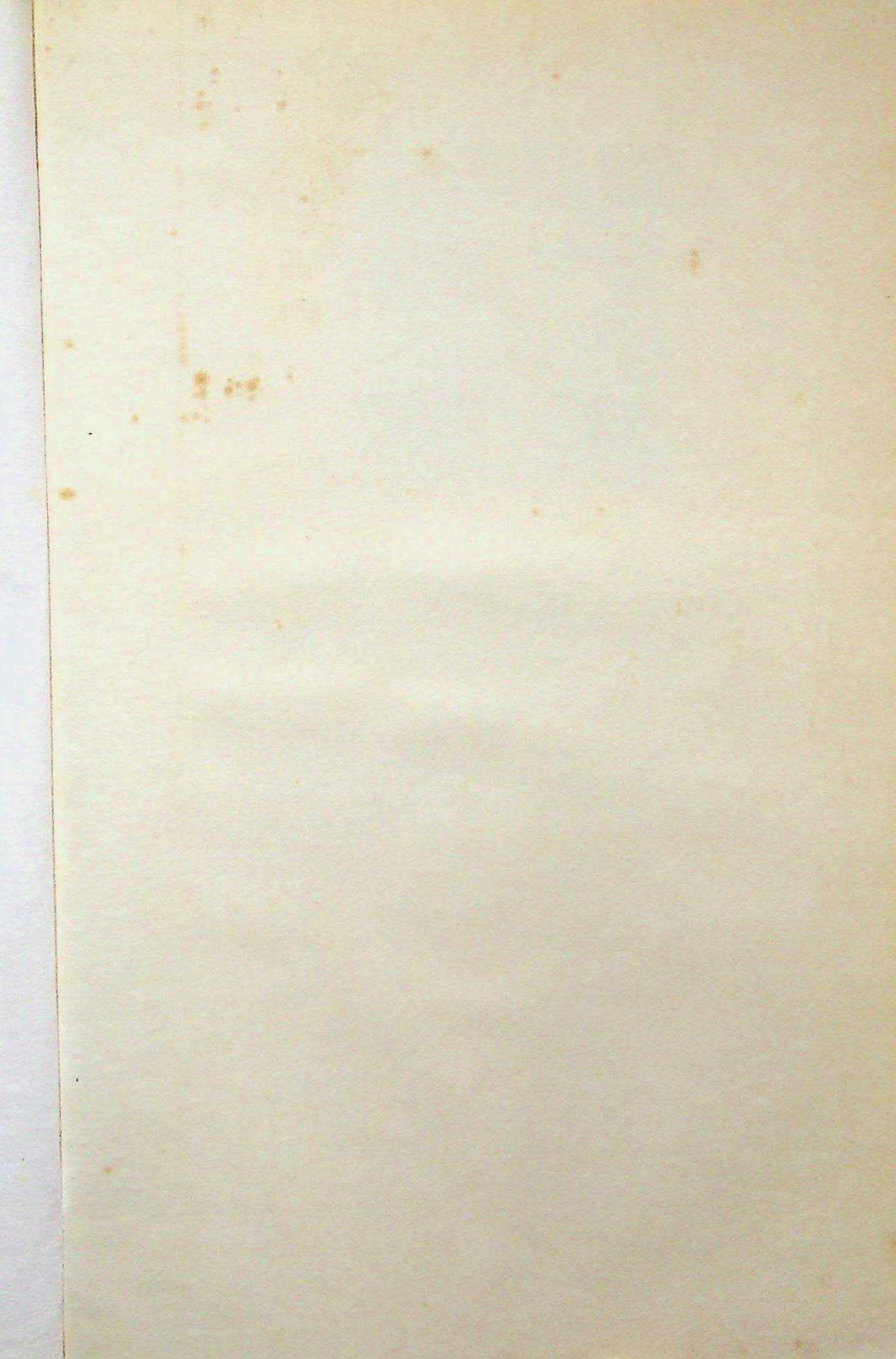
“Like a lioness in rage  
Visho flounces from Kaunsarnag  
Cataracts flow  
from her lovely daughter.  
The water will last  
the long winter.  
Clothed in blue  
she longs for rest.  
A stag capers  
in a deep canyon.

“The heavenly spot on the river-bank  
is nature’s work.  
Springs are there  
and  
uplands pimpled with flowers.  
You will see numberless cool shadows  
and  
the image of the sky.  
Long ago  
Janamajya made fragrant  
offerings to the gods there.  
Step over the spot.

Fetch me a swig of water  
for  
I am parched.”

( From : *Teol* )

\* \* \*









ARJAN DEV MAJBOOR (b:1924) has five anthologies of Kashmiri verse and a translation of Kalidas' *Meghdootam* to his credit. His poems, short stories, research papers and review articles have appeared in the various literary journals of the country. In 1994 the J & K Academy Of Art, Culture and Languages awarded him for his book *Paed Samyik* (Footprints of Time). Political turmoil and militancy forced him to leave Kashmir in 1990. Since then he has been staying at Udhampur in the Jammu Province.





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